

DISCUSSION OF THE AMENDMENTS

Claims 1, 5, 8, 10, 13, 15, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, 27, and 29-31 are currently amended.

Claims 1, 5, 10, 15, 19, 24, 25, 27, and 29-31 have been amended for minor editorial purposes and to clarify claim language. Therefore, these claims are supported by the claims and throughout the present specification, as originally filed.

Claims 8, 13, 18, and 23 have been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions, in order to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first and second paragraphs. These claims are supported by the specification at page 20, lines 10-13, as originally filed.

The specification has been amended to correct minor errors at pages 15 and 16, in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions. Applicants submit that the errors and corrections to the errors are obvious. These amendments are supported by the specification at page 15, lines 7-14, page 17, line 14, and Figure 3.

No new matter has been added by these amendments.

Upon entry of the amendments, claims 1-31 will be pending in the application. However, it is noted that claims 27-31 have been withdrawn due to a Restriction Requirement.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

The present invention relates to a magnet compound material; a magnetic molding produced by compression-molding a magnet compound material in a magnetic field; a magnet roller; a developing device; a process cartridge; and an image forming apparatus, which are not described or suggested by the cited references of record. Accordingly, reconsideration of the present invention is requested in view of the following:

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

The rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Uetake et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,137,188), and the rejection of claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) obvious over the Uetake et al. reference are respectfully traversed.

As admitted by the Examiner in the Office Action at page 5, lines 19-21, the reference does not describe or require the “fine, thermoplastic resin grains” of the present invention.

The reference merely describes the size of the *toner* particles, as recited at column 2, lines 53-56, which is a mixture of the magnetic particles, a resin, and a charge controlling agent. Moreover, there is no size relation indicated between the magnetic particles and the resin component disclosed therein. Further, regarding the resin component itself, the reference only indicates the types of resin that may be used, in which no specific grain size is indicated whatsoever. (See column 3, line 59 through column 4, line 21).

Applicants note, as pointed out by the Examiner, that the reference recites a softening temperature for the resin component at column 5, lines 67-68. However, the reference only refers to the softening temperature in the context of the heating and kneading of the mixture for the toner; not the separate preparation of fine, thermoplastic resin grains.

In contrast, the claimed invention relates to a magnet compound material comprising a magnetic powder and fine, thermoplastic resin grains as major components; and at least one of a pigment and a charge control agent, as recited in amended claim 1.

According to the present specification, these fine resin grains “are used as a binder, they easily fill up gaps between magnet grains and improve density in the event of pressing for thereby increasing a magnetic force. Further, the above [fine] grains reduce gaps to thereby enhance strength.” (Present specification at page 19, lines 6-10).

Therefore, as the reference does not describe or suggest these attributes of the claimed invention, claims 1 and 2 are novel and unobvious over the reference.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

The rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Suzuki et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,342,557) or Tada et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,338,900); and the rejection of claims 1 and 24 as obvious over Ikenaga et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,626,371) are respectfully traversed.

The references do not describe, require, or even define the “fine, thermoplastic resin grains” of the present invention.

In particular, the Examiner’s attention is directed to column 4, line 46 (Resin Component) to column 5, line 21 of the Suzuki et al. reference, which does not recite anything regarding the development of the fine grains of the present invention.

Similarly, Applicants note that the Tada et al. reference does not cure this deficiency, since it only contains a description of the size of the grains of the magnetic powder disclosed therein. (See, e.g., column 4, line 15 through column 5, line 48 of the reference). Moreover, the Ikenaga et al. reference only recites the diameter of the magnetic powder. (See column 11, lines 34-38 of the reference).

Therefore, these references clearly do not describe or suggest the claimed invention.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections is requested.

Further, Applicants submit that none of the above-cited references describes a magnetic compound material having the limitations of dependent claims 3-23 of the claimed invention, or the methods recited in claims 25 and 26. Accordingly, the Examiner's indication of the allowability of these claims is requested.

Upon indication of the allowability of the elected claims, Applicants respectfully request rejoinder of non-elected claims 27-31, which Applicants submit are also allowable, as provided in MPEP § 821.04.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The rejection of claims 8, 13, 18, and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first and second paragraphs are obviated by amendment, as discussed and shown above.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections is requested.

The rejection of claims 1-26 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph is obviated by amendment and traversed.

The claims have been amended to clearly set forth the claimed subject matter. Applicants also direct the Examiner's attention to the "Background of the Invention" at pages 1-9 of the present specification, which clearly sets forth what Applicants consider the improvement of the invention and what is considered known in the art.

Moreover, regarding the rejection of claim 1, Applicants submit the term "fine" is clearly defined throughout the present specification. For instance, Applicants direct the Examiner's attention to page 10, lines 2-5 (i.e., description of Figures **5A**, which pertains to conventional resin pellets, and **5B**, which pertains to the fine grains of the present invention and page 19, lines 1-6, which supports the meaning term "fine"). Figures **5A** and **5B**, which clearly differentiate between conventional resin pellets and the "fine" thermoplastic grains of the present invention, are reproduced below for the Examiner's convenience.

FIG. 5A

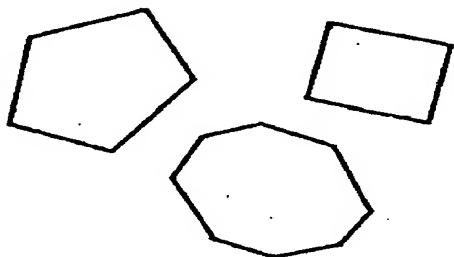
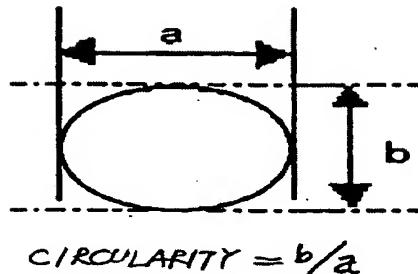


FIG. 5B



Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Objections to the Specification

The objections to the present specification are obviated by amendment, as shown above. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objections are requested.

Obviousness-Type Double Patenting Rejection

Applicants request that the provisional rejection of claim 1 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting over claim 34 of co-pending U.S. Application No. 10/820,052 be held in abeyance until patentable subject matter is indicated.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants note that the Examiner indicates in the Office Action at page 2, lines 15-19 that the Information Disclosure Statements (IDS) filed November 11, 2004, December 14, 2004, February 15, 2005, and October 20, 2005 fail to comply with 37 CFR § 1.98(a)(1), which requires a list of all patents, publications, or other information submitted for consideration by the Office.

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Reply to Office Action of February 1, 2006

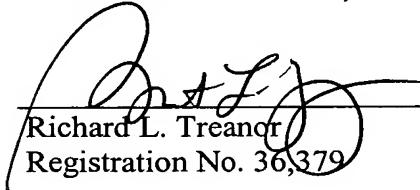
However, Applicants note that an IDS was not filed on November 11, 2004. If the Examiner is referring to the IDS filed on November 5, 2004, the IDS includes a *list* of related unpublished cases (applications) at the time the IDS was filed. Similarly, each IDS documents filed December 14, 2004, February 15, 2005, and October 20, 2005 include the same.

Applicants also note that the Examiner indicates at page 3, lines 10-15 that the listing of references in the specification is not a proper IDS. However, Applicants are unaware of any list of references in the present specification. Accordingly, clarification is requested.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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